

Tips for writing/publishing book reviews, adapted from article below (plus GTI PD/R Committee comments in *italics*):

Writing Academic Book Reviews

By **Casey Brienza** 3/27/2015 *Inside Higher Education*

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/03/27/essay-writing-academic-book-reviews#.VjcR7h2GxY8.mailto>

1. Reminders:

- a. Writing book reviews is a way to help other teachers/academic professionals. They are not exclusively written by long-tenured academics. Your voice matters!
- b. People are reading a book review to know about the book and whether it might work for *them*, so don't launch into strongly held criticisms, especially which are directly tied to the context in which *you* are using the book (see "formula").
- c. Book reviews can be anywhere from 300-1000 words; it varies depending on the book review type, publisher, book type (ex. textbook vs. theoretical). Check length with the publisher you are submitting to (see "Publication").

2. Publication:

- proactive commissioning--when publishers seek out book reviews from you
 - *Look for calls for these in publications from JALT, TESOL, and other affiliates*
- reactive commissioning--when you seek out a publisher and propose your review for publication
 - *Look on websites for JALT, TESOL, and other affiliates for publishers that often publish book reviews. Then, contact their editor with your proposal to submit a book review. You can find a list of potential publishers in our Shared Drive:
TIU GTI Resources>Admin>Professional Development>[Publication Opportunities](#)*

3. Formula: Book reviews generally follow a formula (Brienza, 2015). This may vary slightly with discipline and/or publication venue and/or book type, but use the following "formula" as a starting point:

1. **Introduction.** Hook your reader (think about the problem this book is addressing). Then give publication info and a general description of the book.
2. **Summary of the book's argument.** What does this book say its purpose is? If there is an identifiable thesis statement or statement of purpose, you may want to quote it.
3. **About the author(s).** Who are the authors? What are they famous/known for? What special qualifications and expertise do they have which allows them to write on the subject? How could this book be applied to a wider research, teaching, skill, or context focus?
4. **Summary of contents.** Summarize the range of material/topics covered in the book. If it is research-driven, include research methods.
5. **Strength.** What does this book do well? Why/how is this strong/useful?
6. **Weakness.** What needs to be improved? What was something that was omitted or neglected in this text which you believe is important for a book like it to have? Why is this important?
7. **Conclusion.** Summarize your arguments. Then, say who you think would be most interested in/benefitted by reading/using this book?

***About The Author: Casey Brienza is a lecturer in publishing and digital media in the Department of Culture and Creative Industries at City University London.*

Other useful links for “how to” tips and information:

http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/CYE_BookReviewGuidelines.htm

Writing an academic book review.rtf

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/student-services/documents/how-to-read-and-write-book-reviews.pdf>

Example book reviews:

Theoretical:

Cunningham, T. (2015). [A Review of the book *Pronunciation Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching* by L. Grant]. *ORTESOL Journal*, 32, 73-74.

http://ortesol.org/documents/Journals/ORTESOL_Journal_Volume_32_2015.pdf

Textbook:

Wolff, G. J. (2015). [A Review of *CNN Student News, Vol. 2* by Sekido, F., Kogure, M. Arnold, J. & Ikeda, K.]. *The Language Teacher* 39(5), 27-28.

<http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/book-reviews/articles/4775-cnn-student-news-vol-2>

Graded Reader:

Murray, A. (2015). [A Review of the book *Choose Your Own Adventure: Mystery of the Maya* by R. A. Montgomery (Adapted by M. Benevides)]. *The Language Teacher* 39(6), 28-29.

<http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/book-reviews/articles/4888-choose-your-own-adventure-mystery-maya>